

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10

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GAC-01 NIC-01 IO-12 SAJ-01 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00 INT-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6007

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, JA

SUBJ: SOVIET- JAPANESE RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: JAPANESE EMBASSY VIEW OF SOVIET APPROACH TO RELATIONS WITH JAPAN LINKS IT TO DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET RELATIONS WITH OTHER MAJOR POWERS, PARTICULARLY U. S. AND CHINA. JAPANESE HERE ARE CONCERNED THAT SOVIET WILL SUCCESSFULLY PLAY OFF US , WEST GERMANY AND JAPANESE ECONOMIC INTERESTS. JAPANESE GROUP HAS INVITED SOVIET AMERICNAOLOGISTS FOR SYMPOSIUM. END SUMMARY.

2. SURRING REGULAR MEETING OF U. S. AND JAPANESE EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICERS MAY 23, JAPANESE POL COUNSELOR CHIBA PRESENTED HIS ANALYSIS OF SOVIET- JAPANESE RELATIONS SINCE GROMYKO VISIT TO JAPAN IN JAN 1972, WHEN CHIBA SAID USSR BEGAN TO TREAT JAPAN AS POWER IN ITS OWN RIGHT. BASIC THEMESE WAS THAT SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD JAPAN HAS FLUCTUATED ACCORDING TO SOVIET PRECEPTIONS OF U. S. POLICY AND JAPANESE- CHINESE RELATIONS. THUS GROMYKO' S RELATIVE WARMTH TOWARD JAPAN DURING HIS VISIT REFLECTED SOVIET UNEASINESS ABOUT U. S.- CHINESE RELATIONS. LINE HARDENED IN THE SPRING AFTER SOVIETS

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WERE REASSURED BY NIXON'S VISIT TO MOSCOW AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD TOKAY BECAME MORE SELF-CONFIDENT. FONMIN OHIRA'S TRIP TO MOSCOW LAST FALL WAS INTENDED PRIMARILY TO REASSURE USSR IN WAKE OF TANAKA VISIT TO CHINA, BUT IT DID NOT PREVENT DEVELOPMENT OF TOUGH SOVIET PRESS LINE TOWARD JAPAN AROUND TURN OF YEAR. BY FEBRUARY 1973 THREE FACTORS COMBINED TO CHANGE SITUATION:

- A. TANAKA'S DOMESTIC POPULARITY HAD DROPPED AS RESULT INFLATION, ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS ETC.;
- B. HONEYMOON WITH CHINA WAS OVER AND CHINESE ATTITUDE HAD TOUGHENED AS REFLECTED IN DISPUTE OVER JAPANESE RIGHT TO FLY TO TAIWAN;
- C. THERE WAS REALIZATION OF NEED TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO USSR.

WHEREAS OVERTURE TO CHINA WAS REFLECTION OF POPULAR ENTHUSIASM FOR CLOSER RELATIONS WITH CHINA, SUPPORTED BY PRESS CAMPAIGNS, APPROACH TO USSR REFLECTED IN TANAKA'S LETTER TO BREZHNEV IN MARCH WAS NARROWLY-BASED INITIATIVE CONCEIVED BY SMALL GROUP IN FONMIN.

3. TANAKA'S LETTER CHANGED SITUATION OVERNIGHT BECAUSE BREZHNEV APPARENTLY PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITY TO ADD ANOTHER DIPLOMATIC "VICTORY" TO HIS STRING AND THUS BECAME PERSONALLY HOOKED ON PURSUING IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS. WHILE BREZHNEV HAS INVITED TANAKA TO VISIT USSR, CHIBA SAID SOVIETS HAVE NOT YET ANSWERED JAPANESE PROPOSAL THAT TRIP BE SCHEDULED FOR LATE SUMMER-EARLY FALL OF THIS YEAR. (WE UNDERSTAND FROM ANOTHER JAPANESE EMBASSY THAT PROPOSAL WAS FOR AUGUST-SEPTEMBER.) CHIBA NOTED THAT, AS RESULT OF NEW TREND IN RELATIONS, JAPAN WAS LISTED FOR FIRST TIME AHEAD OF INDIA IN BREZHNEV'S MAY DAY SPEECH.

4. ON OTHER HAND, JAPANESE EMBASSY AND BUSINESSMEN DETECT GROWING SOVIET TOUGHNESS AND SEEMING INDIFFERENCE TO TRADE AND ECONOMIC TIES. JAPANESE ATTRIBUTE THIS TO CURRENT SOVIET FOCUS ON FRG AND U.S., AND HAVE FEELING THAT SOVIETS WILL INCREASINGLY PLAY OFF THE THREE COUNTRIES AGAINST EACH OTHER IN TRADE/ECONOMIC FIELD. IN ADDITION TO PRESS WARNINGS THAT JAPAN IS ONLY ONE OF MANY TRADE PARTNERS, CHIBA SEES EVIDENCE OF THIS IN SOVIET HANDLING OF TYUMEN OIL NEGOTIATIONS. JAPANESE GROUP HAD EXPECTED TO COME TO USSR IN MAY TO NEGOTIATE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TYUMEN, BUT SOVIETS HAVE POSTPONED MEETING

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UNTIL JUNE AND EVEN THAT IS NOT DEFINITE. JAPANESES SUSPECT THAT SOVIETS MAY BE DICKERING WITH GERMANS TO TAKE ON TYUMEN PIPELINE PROJECT, PERHAPS IN JOINT ARRANGEMENTS WITH AMERICAN FIRMS WHICH COULD MARKET OIL IN PACIFIC AREA. ASKED ABOUT US PRIVATE FIRM PARTICIPATION WITH JAPAN IN TYUMEN PROJECT, CHIBA INDICATED THIS WAS NOT EXCLUDED BUT EXPRESSED MORE POSITIVE INTEREST IN US PARTICIPATION IN YAKUTIYA PROJECT.

CHIBA EXPLAINED THAT UNDER JAPANESE BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES TANAKA CANNOT COMMIT HIS GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE CREDITS FOR TYUMENT PROJECT, E. G., DURING HIS VISIT TO THE USSR, IF PRIVATE FIRMS ARE NOT FIRST PROVIDED WITH ADDITIONAL DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT. CONTRARY TO CHIBA'S EXPECTATION, BREZHNEV'S REASSURING REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT TO JAPANESE AMBASSADOR HAVE NOT RESULTED IN REQUESTED INFORMATION. CHIBA PREDICTED THAT, BECAUSE OF PAST AGREEMENTS, LEVEL OF SOVIET- JAPANESE TRADE WILL HOLD UP IN 1973 BUT BEGIN TO DROP OFF IN 1974 UNLESS NEW CONTRACTS ARE SIGNED.

5. CHIBA MENTIONED UPCOMING VISIT TO JAPAN AT END OF MAY OF SIX- MAN DELEGATION FEATURING TWO DEPUTY CHIEFS OF USA INSTITUTE (SHERSHNEV AND ZHURKIN), JOURNALIST VICTOR MAYEVSKY, AND DEPUTY CHIEF OF WORLD ECONOMY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS INSTITUTE PRIMAKOV. THEY HAVE BEEN INVITED BY A PRIVATE JAPANESE GROUP WHICH, AS CHIBA DESCRIBED IT, USED TO BE INTERESTED IN OKINAWA'S STATUS AND IS NOW FOCUSING ON THE U. S. SECURITY TREATY AND THE STATUS OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES. APPARENTLY THE GROUP HAS ENTICED THE SOVIETS BY THE PROSPECT OF DISCUSSING THE SECURITY TREATY BUT WILL USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME POINTS ABOUT THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES.

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